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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 1025

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KE

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF FY 77 MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO KENYA

REF: STATE 017370 (DTG 230423Z JAN 76)

1. THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF FY 77 MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROPOSED FOR KENYA IS SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO PARA 7 REFTEL, AND IS PREMISED ON ASSUMPTION THAT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS TO IMPLEMENT DECISION IN PRINCIPLE LAST YEAR TO ASSIST KENYA IN MEETING ITS LONG-TERM NEEDS FOR MODERNIZATION OF ITS SMALL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT.

2. NEEDS: SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1963, KENYA HAS CONCENTRATED ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HAS DEVOTED VERY LIMITED RESOURCES TO DEFENSE FORCES AND EQUIPMENT. THE MAJOR EXTERNAL THREAT IT FACED IN THE SIXTIES WAS ENCROACHMENT ON ITS NORTHEASTERN TERRITORIES BY ARMED SOMALI BANDITS WHO DREW THEIR INSPIRATION FROM SOMALI IRREDENTIST CLAIMS TO THE AREA. THIS THREAT WAS DISPOSED OF THROUGH MILITARY FIRMNESS FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATION PROMPTED BY STRONG PRESSURE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION ON SOMALIA.

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3. THE SITUATION TODAY IS VERY DIFFERENT. WHEREAS SOMALIA A DECADEAGO WAS MILITARILY WEAK, IT IS NOW HEAVILY ARMED WITH SOPHISTICATED PLANES AND TANKS BY THE SOVIETS. ITS IRREDENTIST CLAIMS REMAIN EMBODIED IN THE SOMALI CONSTITUTION. MOREOVER, VIRTUALLY ALL OF KENYA'S OTHER NEIGHBORS HAVE MADE GIANT STRIDS FORWARD IN MILITARY CAPABILITY. OF THESE, UGANDA IS THE MOST WORRISOME TO KENYA BECAUSE OF THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP. APART FROM ANY BILATERAL QUARRELS THAT COULD LEAD TO CONFLICT, KENYA STANDS A FAIR RISK OF BEING DRAWN INTO EITHER A SOMALI-ETHIOPIA WAR OR A UGANDA-TANZANIA WAR SINCE IN BOTH CASES THE BELLIGERENTS WOULD BE TEMPTED TO USE KENYA'S TERRITORY.

4. IN THE FACE OF THIS MILITARY IMBALANCE, WHAT KENYA NEEDS IS SUFFICIENT UP-TO-DATE EQUIPMENT TO ACHIEVE MINIMUM CREDIBLE DETERRENCE OF INFRINGEMENTS OF ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, TO REMOVE THE TEMPTATION FOR ADVENTURISM BY ITS NEIGHBORS. FOR KENYA, THIS MEANS SOMETHING TO OFFSET THE UGANDAN AND SOMALIA MIG-21 CAPABILITY BY REPLACING ITS HANDFUL OF KOREAN-WAR-VINTAGE INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT, AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS TO NEUTRALIZE SOVIET-BUILT TANKS IN BORDER TERRAIN TAILOR-MADE FOR TANK WARFARE. KENYA ALSO NEEDS IMPROVED MOBILITY FOR TROOPS AND WEAPONS, WHICH IN THE ABSENCE OF ROADS MEANS HELICOPTERS AND TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. KENYANS HAVE CALCULATED WITH HELP OF BRITISH ADVISERS THAT ACHIEVEMENT OF BASIC CAPABILITIES REQUIRED TO MODERNIZE FORCES WILL REQUIRE FOREIGN CURRENCY EXPENDITURE KF DOLS 200 MILLION OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS, TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER DOLS 100 MILLION IN LOCAL CURRENCY.

5. EFFECTIVENESS OF U.S. ASSISTANCE: SINCE AT THIS WRITING U.S. HAS OPENED DOLS 5 MILLION FMS CREDIT FOR KENYA BUT HAS YET TO CONCLUDE FIRST SALE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE ASSISTANCE THAT MIGHT BE PROVIDED IN FY 77. WHAT CAN BE SAID IS THAT ALL DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS IN KENYA HAVE BEEN PRACTICAL, DOWN-TO-EARTH, AND FOCUSED ON KENYA'S REAL NEEDS. OFFICERS OF THIS MISSION, AS CONFIDENTIAL

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WELL AS VISITING U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL, HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE PROFESSIONALISM DISPLAYED AT ALL LEVELS OF KENYA'S ARMED FORCES. EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING PROVIDED TO KENYA ARE LIKELY TO BE PUT TO GOOD USE AND APPRECIATED.

6. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE ELEMENTS: AS OUTLINED ABOVE IN DESCRIPTION OF NEEDS, KENYA HAS A GOOD IDEA OF WHERE IT WANTS TO BE IN NEXT FIVE YEARS.

ITS INITIAL APPROACH TO U.S. WAS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN MEETING FIGHTER AIRCRAFT REQUIREMENTS, BUT DISCUSSIONS HAVE SINCE BROADENED TO ENCOMPASS POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING GROUND-FORCES EQUIPMENT FROM U.S., PARTLY IN RECOGNITION OF HIGH PRICE TAG OF AIRCRAFT PACKAGE. MOST OR ALL OF DOLS 5 MILLION FY 77 FMS CREDIT WILL BE USED FOR PROGRESS PAYMENTS ON AIRCRAFT IF AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON ADDITIONAL FINANCING; OTHERWISE, PRIORITY WILL PROBABLY BE GIVEN TO ANTI-TANK WEAPONS. IF AN AIRCRAFT SALE IS CONSUMMATED, DOLS 200,000 GRANT TRAINING MONEY (IN ADDITION TO DOLS 1.1 MILLION IN FY 76 AND 75 BUDGET) WILL BE USED MAINLY FOR PILOT AND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE TRAINING; IF NO U.S. PLANES ARE PROVIDED, KENYA MAY STILL WISH TO USE MONEY FOR BASIC PILOT TRAINING IN EXPECTATION THAT IT WILL OBTAIN PLANES FROM OTHER WESTERN SOURCE. FURTHER DISCUSSION OF INTERRELATIONSHIP OF FY 77 ASSISTANCE ELEMENTS MUST AWAIT OUTCOME OF U.S.-KENYA MILITARY TALKS IN WASHINGTON IN MID-FEBRUARY.

7. IMPACT OF OTHER ASSISTANCE: KENYA IS A MAJOR RECIPIENT OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE LOANS FROM US, UK, EC, JAPAN, SWEDEN, CANADA AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS WORLD BANK. IT HAS CONSISTENTLY GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY TO DEVELOPMENT; IN KENYA, CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES STILL DETERMINE BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS, UNLIKE NEIGHBORS UNDER MILITARY RULE. NEVERTHELESS, KENYAN GOVERNMENT HAS EVIDENTLY CONCLUDED THAT SOME MILITARY EXPENDITURES CANNOT BE POSTPONED MUCH FURTHER. THIS DECISION COMES AT A TIME WHEN TRADITIONAL SUPPLIER OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE-- BRITAIN-- IS UNWILLING AND UNABLE TO INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION MUCH ABOVE PAST LEVELS. HENCE KENYA HAS TURNED TO OTHER SOURCES, ESPECIALLY U.S. ALTHOUGH MANY

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DONORS ARE PRECLUDED FROM FINANCING MILITARY HARDWARE, SOME MAY PROVIDE NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT AND OTHERS MAY INCREASE STRAIGHT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO REDUCE DEMANDS ON KENYA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES, THEREBY INDIRECTLY HELPING MEET DEFENSE NEEDS. BECAUSE MILITARY EXPENDITURES ARE CURRENTLY BELOW ONE PER CENT OF GDP, OR 5 PERCENT OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES, INCREASE IN DEFENSE BUDGET AND SOME ADDITIONAL DEBT SERVICE CAN PROBABLY BE OFFSET BY ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS NORMAL ECONOMIC GROWTH. KENYA REGARDS DEFENSE MODERNIZATION AS GOOD INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL STABILITY, WHICH IS PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESSFUL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AS WELL AS CRUCIAL PRIVATE INVESTMENT. MARSHALL

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